



**Gianni Biaggi de Blasys
Founding Trustee**

Anna came into our family in Bogliasco in 1946, right after World War II. A seventeen year old Ligurian student of literature, she was hired by our parents to tutor my two sisters, since the schools had broken down. Cristina was 9, and Marina was 7. Instead of addressing Anna as *Maîtresse*, Marina, who had learned French in Switzerland, pronounced the word *Maîtlesse*. The word changed into *maîtlessi*, then she dropped the *Maî* and it became *Tlessi*, a nickname used from then on by our family and friends! Never taking herself too seriously, Anna accepted the nickname happily and that cemented, much more than an academic chore, a friendship that was going to last. Indeed, she practically became part of the family.

Years later, after our father's death in 1979, she became even closer, to the point that she came around and shared almost every meal with us in Villa dei Pini during various times of the year. By that time, my brother-in-law, James Harrison, began to think about creating a foundation as a way of preserving and extending the creative potential of the Bogliasco properties. Anna threw herself into the nascent Foundation in 1996 and became its Vice President and Resident Director, while James became its President. The demand for fellowships started to create pressure at the *Centro* like water from a dam, but a valve was implemented to manage the selection process and the excellence of the program soon became apparent worldwide.

In 2001, subtle tremors appeared on Anna's hands, and a diagnosis was later formulated, like a thunderbolt in blue sky: Parkinson's disease. But Anna, motivated, hard working and dignified, didn't lament in public and held on until she could no longer work: the toll sounded in December 2009, at which point Ivana, her assistant, took her place as a new capable director. Unfortunately, Anna's condition did not improve; on the contrary, she was gradually confined to her home with assistance from caregivers and her devoted son Andrea. On October 30th, two days before her 85th birthday, Anna passed away peacefully.



Gianni and Marina with their father, Leo Biaggi

The family, the Foundation members, the staff and the Fellows who knew her are immensely grateful to Anna and will remember the many qualities she had. They'll remember a trusted and loyal friend, a hard working, versatile, brilliant and learned person; a joyful companion who loved life, loved to travel, loved museums and books, loved to eat and was an excellent cook.